stated that there was no question of the Pakistani authorities handing over any Pakistani national to India. As regards the presence in Pakistan, of the non-Pakistan nationals who figure on the list, the President sought to obfuscate the issue by commenting that Pakistan had not given asylum to any such person.

Other comments from Pakistani spokesmen, essentially as a delaying tactic, have suggested that the issue could be handled after the two countries conclude an extradition treaty when talks are resumed.

Killing of Security personnel in West Bengal

848. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bangladesh-based faction of the Harkat-ul-Jehad-e-Islami is reportedly involved in the killing of Security personnel of the West Bengal on the American Centre in Kolkata;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the matter was taken up with the Government of Bangladesh; and

(d) if so, with what result?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) On January 22, 2002 the Kolkata Police force personnel guarding the American Centre in Kolkata were fired at by armed terrorists. The matter is still under investigation.

Passport Scandal in Houston Consulate

849. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:
SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Passport Scandal in Houston Consulate" appearing in the Hindustan Times on the 21st January, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that fake passports were issued from Indian Consulate General's offices at Houston, San Francisco, Chicago and New York;

(d) if so, since when these activities were being carried out and the number of fake passports issued; and

(e) the action taken against the concerned officials?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Government conducted an internal inquiry into the matter and found that the allegations levelled in the newspaper report were false. There was thus no question of taking any action against any official.

British Prime Minister's visit

850. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether British Prime Minister visited India recently;

(b) if so, the details of the matters discussed; and

(c) the outcome of the discussions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Prime Minister Tony Blair visited India from 4 to 7 January, 2002.

(b) and (c) The discussion focussed on recent global and regional developments of mutual concern and revealed a commonality of approach on issues of strategic concern to both countries. On 6 January, the two Prime Ministers signed the New Delhi Declaration which identifies the areas of partnership between India and the United Kingdom in the 21st century. The Declaration reaffirms the close cooperation between the two countries to eliminate terrorism. It condemns unambiguously all acts of terrorism and rejects the arguments of those who attempt to justify terrorism. The Declaration states that "the U.K. continues to view India as a natural contender for permanent membership of the Security Council and will work with India to achieve it." It also outlines the partnership between India and the UK in the areas of development, education, science and technology and trade and investment.